

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method for multicast document printing, the method comprising:

receiving document data to be printed at a host, wherein said document data includes a number of copies of a document~~[[s]]~~ to be created from the document data;
~~dividing~~ allocating a subset of the number of copies to each of ~~be created into at least two batches for~~ at least two corresponding, separate printers;
formatting the document data into a joint print job;
~~embedding routing information for distribution of the batches~~ instructions specific to each of the corresponding printers into the print job, the instructions indicating for each of the corresponding printers the allocated subset of copies to be printed by that printer; and
~~transmitting multicasting the joint print job as one transmission~~ to the at least two separate printers connected by a common network to the host.
2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the host is a printer.
3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the host is application software resident in a printer.
4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the host is a computer.
5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the host is a scanner.
6. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein the printer further comprises a multi-function peripheral.
7. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein the printer further comprises a copier.
8. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein the printer further comprises a fax machine.
9. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the transmitting the print job to at least two separate printers includes reception and temporary storage at a store-and-forward device.

10. (Currently amended) A computer readable medium, said medium containing software code comprising:

code operable to receive document data to be printed at a host, wherein said document data includes a number of copies of a document to be created from the document data;

code operable to divide the number of copies to be created into at least two batches for at least two corresponding, separate printers;

code operable to format the document data into a joint print job;

code operable to embed ~~routing information for distribution of the batches~~ instructions specific to each of the corresponding printers into the joint print job, the instructions indicating for each of the corresponding printers the number of copies to be printed by that printer; and

code operable to ~~transmit~~ request multicast transmission of the joint print job in one transmission to the at least two separate printers connected by a common network to the host.

11. (original) The medium of claim 10, wherein the computer readable medium is read by a computer.

12. (original) The medium of claim 10, wherein the computer readable medium is read by a printer.

13. (original) The medium of claim 10, wherein the medium is a diskette.

14. (original) The medium of claim 10, wherein the medium is a compact disc.

15. (original) The medium of claim 10, wherein the medium is a network-accessible file.

16. (currently amended) A network device, comprising:

a port operable to connect to a network and receiving document data to be converted into hard copy output with a predetermined number of copies of a document to be created;

a processor in communication with the port, operable to format the document data into a joint print job comprising a document and instructions to at least two printers assigning

a number of copies of the document ~~and to assign batches to each of the~~ at least two printers, wherein the sum of copies to be created by the at least two printers ~~within each batch~~ is substantially equal to the number of copies to be created; and

a communications port operable to multicast ~~transmit~~ the joint print job ~~batches in one transmission~~ to printers connected to the network device by a common network.

17. (original) The network device of claim 16, wherein the network device is a computer.

18. (original) The network device of claim 16, wherein the network device is a printer.

19. (original) The network device of claim 16, wherein the processor is a raster image processor.

20. (new) A document printing method comprising:

formatting a joint print job comprising a document to be printed and instructions specific to each of at least two printers to each print one or more copies of the document; multicasting the joint print job over a network coupled to each of the at least two printers.

21. (new) The method of claim 20, further comprising receiving the joint print job at one of the at least two printers, locating the instructions specific to that printer within the joint print job, and printing the number of copies specified in the specific instructions.

22. (new) A document printing method comprising:

receiving a multicast network transmission at a networked printer; determining whether the multicast network transmission contains a joint print job; and when the multicast network transmission contains a joint print job, locating instructions specific to the networked printer in the joint print job and printing at least one copy of a document contained in the joint print job according to the instructions.